SATELLITE ANTENNA MOUNTING APPARATUS AND METHOD

Cross-Reference to Related Applications

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. Application No. 10/038,755, filed December 31, 2001, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein in its entirety by reference.

Field of the Invention

[0002] This application is generally related to antenna mounting brackets and more particularly to a telescoping bracket for mounting and aligning a satellite antenna disk.

Background of the Invention

[0003] While the physical size required of satellite dish antennas for receiving clear audio and video signals has decreased as a result of increased satellite receiver sensitivity, the reduced size has made it desirable to mount satellite antennas on a building such as a residence. Typically, an unobstructed view of an appropriate satellite operable with the antenna is achieved by mounting the antenna on the roof or sidewall of the building. Mounting on what is typically a pitched roof often results in diminishing the integrity of the roof causing leaks as a result of drilling through the roofing material into rafters for obtaining structural integrity for the mounting. Mounting to sidewalls typically requires penetrating concrete block and the need for special tools and concrete anchors as suggested in U.S. Patent No. 6,195,066 to Peques, Jr. et al. describing a satellite dish mounting arm for mounting to a vertical sidewall of a building. As identified in the '066 patent, the cantilever support avoids problems associated with mounting the dish to the eaves of the building, which eaves are known to have an inherent structurally weakness, especially for

houses. So it would seem to those in the art of mounting such satellite disk antennas.

[0004] U.S. Patent No. 5,647,567 to Pugh, Jr. et al. for an antenna mounting bracket further emphasizes that manufacturers typically advise users to avoid mounting the antenna on the eave of a house because of the eave's lack of rigidity, stating that if the deficient rigidity could be overcome, an eave would be an ideal location for mounting the antenna. By way of example, the eave location allows an installer to avoid having to mount the antenna to a chimney, directly to the roof, or on a typically obstructed southern sidewall of the building. The eave can provide almost any side of the building for satisfying the need for unobstructed signal reception while better blending the antenna within the profile of the building. To account fro the eave structural deficiency, the '567 patent teaches use of a reinforcing antenna mount including an arm having a back plate to be secur4ed to a sidewall of the building plus a brace to secure a telescoping arm to the eave, while an end of the telescoping arm is secured to the antenna.

[0005] With the devices and methods known in the art, such as the roof mounting structure of U.S. Patent No. 5,617,680 to Beatty and the multi-bracketed wall mounting structures of U.S. Patent No. 5,829,724 to Duncan and 4,510,502 to Hovland et al., by way of example, there remains a need to provide a satellite antenna mounting method and apparatus that has minimal elements for ease on installation and still provides a wide variety of locations about the building for obtaining an unobstructed signal from the satellite communication with the antenna.

Summary of the Invention

[0006] In view of the foregoing background, it is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a mounting apparatus and method for easily and inexpensively securing a satellite antenna to a building. It is further an object of the invention to provide an apparatus and method for mounting the antenna

to an eave of a building while maintaining sufficient structural integrity when supporting the antenna under its planned use.

[0007] These and other objects, features and advantages according to the present invention are provided by an apparatus for mounting a satellite antenna dish assembly to a soffit of a building, the apparatus comprising a mount including a base portion having a body portion attached thereto. The base portion includes a plurality of holes for securing the mount to a soffit by screwing the base into a stud or truss member to which the soffit is attached. The body portion includes a bore for receiving an elongate arm slidable within the bore. One end of the arm includes a plate adapted for attaching the arm to a satellite antenna dish assembly. A lock secures the elongate arm to the body portion. In one preferred embodiment, the arm is locked in place within the bore using a rib longitudinally extending along a peripheral portion of the body portion, the rib having a plurality of threaded holes extending therethrough and into the bore for receiving setscrews to bias against elongate arm and thus secure the arm to the mount. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the elongate arm has a circular cross-section for allowing the arm to be received within the bore, also having a circular cross-section. For the embodiment of a single mount herein described, the body portion of the mount is integrally formed with the base portion, and a riser portion separating the base from the body portion.

[0008] In a method aspect of the present invention, mounting a satellite antenna to an eave of a building comprises providing a mount including a base portion having a body portion including a plurality of holes for securing the mount to a soffit. The mount is positioned onto a soffit such that the holes are aligned with a supporting member, such as a truss or stud, to which the soffit is attached, the soffit being positioned between the base portion and the supporting member. The mount is then secured to the soffit by having screws extend through the holes, through the soffit, and into the structural member. An elongate arm having a free end and an opposing end for attached a satellite dish assembly is slidably extended into the bore with the elongate arm

positioned within the bore for permitting the opposing end to place the satellite antenna beyond the eave of the building. Once held in a desired position, the elongate arm is secured to the mount using setscrews threaded into the arm through the body portion, thus securing the satellite antenna to the eave of the building.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0009] A preferred embodiment of the present invention as well as others that will become more apparent by referring to the following detailed description and drawings incorporated herein and forming a part of the specification to illustrate examples of embodiments of the invention, in which:

[0010] FIG. 1 is a left front perspective view of one embodiment of the present invention illustrating a satellite dish antenna mounted to an eave of a building;

[0011] FIG. 2 is a left front perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the present invention illustrating a satellite dish antenna mounted to a sidewall of a building under an eave thereof;

[0012] FIG. 3 is a right side perspective view of the present invention as illustrated in one use in FIG. 1;

[0013] FIG. 4 is a top plan view of a single mount of FIG. 3;

[0014] FIGS. 5 and 6 are left and right side views of the single mount of FIG. 4;

[0015] FIG. 7 is a partial cross-section view illustrating an attachment of the embodiment of FIGS. 4 - 6 to a soffit and truss assembly;

[0016] FIG. 8 is a partial cross-section view taken through lines 8 - 8 of FIG. 4;

[0017] FIG. 9 is a partial cross-section view taken through lines 9 - 9 of FIG. 4;

[0018] FIG. 10 is a bottom plan view of the single mount of FIG. 3;

[0019] FIG. 11 is a left side perspective view of the alternate embodiment of the present invention as illustrated in one use in FIG. 2;

[0020] FIG. 12 is a side view of the mount embodiment of FIG. 11, the opposing side view being a mirror image thereof;

[0021] FIG. 13 is a front view of the embodiment of FIG. 12;

[0022] FIG. 14 is a rear view of the embodiment of FIG. 12;

[0023] FIG. 15 is a bottom view of the embodiment of FIG. 12;

[0024] FIG. 16 is a top view of the embodiment of FIG. 12;

[0025] FIG. 17 is an end view of an alternate embodiment of the bracket of FIG. 2; and

[0026] FIGS. 18 and 19 are side views illustrating the alternate mount embodiments of FIGS. 1 and 2 respectively, while including arm members in phantom view.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

[0027] The present invention will now be described more fully with reference to the accompanying drawings in which preferred embodiments of the invention are shown and described. It is to be understood that the invention may be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the illustrated embodiments set forth herein. Rather, the applicant provides these embodiments so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art. Like numbers refer to like elements there through.

[0028] As illustrated initially with reference to Fig. 1, one embodiment of the present invention includes a mounting bracket **10**, an apparatus for mounting a satellite antenna dish assembly **12** to a soffit **14** of a building **16** for supporting the assembly **12** from the soffit and extending it beyond the fascia **18** and edge of the roof **20.** An alternate embodiment of the present invention includes a bracket **11** mounted to a sidewall **22** of the building **16** as illustrated with reference to FIG. 2. Both functional features of each apparatus **10**, **11**, as well as preferred ornamental designs will be herein described.

[0029] With reference now to FIG. 3, one preferred embodiment of the mounting bracket **10** comprises a single mount **24** including a base portion **26** and a body portion **28** attached to the base portion through a riser **30**, all of which are integrally formed. The use of a single mount **24** as herein described

permits easy installation of the satellite dish assembly **12** and avoids the need for excess supporting elements typically thought to be needed. It is anticipated that the mount **24** will be formed from an extruding process, casting process, or by mechanical attaching of each portion, as desired and without departing form the teachings of the present invention. The riser **30** is positioned so as to form opposing flanges **32**, **34** on the base potion **26**, as further illustrated with reference to FIGS. 4-6. The flanges **32**, **34** as herein described for one preferred embodiment are elongate and extend longitudinally alone the body portion **28.** Alternatively, a plurality of flange portions may be employed now having the teachings of the present invention. The elongate flanges as herein described provide an esthetically pleasing appearance and enhance the thought of simplicity for the mount. Alternatively, there may be no rib.

[0030] A plurality of holes **36** within the flanges **32**, **34** permit the attaching of the single mount **24** to the soffit **14** preferably using screws **38** screwed through the soffit and into a soffit supporting structure **40** such as a metal or wood, stud or truss, as illustrated with reference to FIGS. 7-9. As herein illustrated, the holes **36** are inwardly angled to permit ease in anchoring to the structure **40.** Typically, a bottom wall **42** of the mount **24** will be flat, as illustrated with reference to FIG. 10 to accommodate the generally flat surface of the soffit **14.** However, it is expected that alternate surface shapes may be desired depending on the structures to which the mount **24** is attached.

[0031] With reference again to FIGS. 3 and 7, by way of example, the body portion **28** is elongate in one preferred embodiment and generally cylindrical in shape, and includes a bore **44** having a circular cross-section for slidably and rotatably receiving an elongate arm **46** having a complementing circular cross-section. The elongate arm **46** includes one end **48** slidable within the bore and an opposing second end **50** adapted for attaching to the satellite antenna dish assembly **12** earlier described with reference to FIGS. 1 and 2. In one preferred embodiment, a plate **52** is attached to the second end **50** for securing the arm **46** to the assembly **12**. The plate **52** may have a rectangular

shape as illustrated with reference to FIG. 3, or alternate shapes to suit the needs of a particular antenna being mounted. In the mount **24** herein described by way of example, the bore passes entirely through the body portion **28** for permitting the elongate arm **46** to be longitudinally displaced beyond that of a bore that only passes partially into the body portion, an acceptable alternative to the design while keeping within the teachings of the present invention. Further, the riser **30** may have various height dimensions depending on the separation desired between the soffit **14** and the body portion **28**, and thus the arm **46.** There may be no riser as an alternative.

[0032] With reference again to FIGS. 3, 7 and 8, by way of example, a lock **54** for detachably securing the elongate arm **46** to the body portion **28** includes a plurality of setscrews **56** operable within threaded holes **58** in the body portion for securing the arm within the bore **44.** In one preferred embodiment of the present invention, and as herein described by way of example, the body portion **28** is formed as an elongate tube with a rib **60** longitudinally extending along a peripheral portion of the body portion. The rib **60** provides additional tube wall strengthening and is a preferred location for the threaded holes **58** for receiving the setscrews **56** used to removably secure the arm **46** to the mount **24**. The rib **60** may alternatively be formed as a plurality of rib portions, a thicker wall portion, or other form as may be desired. The use of a rib permits use of a small walled tube for the body portion. The elongate rib as herein described provides an esthetically pleasing appearance and enhances the thought of simplicity for the mount. Alternatively, there may be no rib.

[0033] A method for mounting a satellite antenna, the satellite dish assembly **12** as herein described by way of example, and using the mounting bracket **10**, may comprise positioning the bottom wall **42** of the mount **24** onto the soffit **14** such that the holes **36** are aligned to permit screws **38** to be secured into the supporting structure **40** as illustrated with reference again to FIG. 7, the soffit being positioned between the base portion **26** and the supporting structure **40**. The mount is secured to the soffit by the screws, but alternatively may be secured by other attaching means such as gluing and

nailing. Screws are herein described by way of example, and are preferred to allow ease in removal of the mount for relocation.

[0034] The arm **46** is positioned into the bore **44** and secured therein using the setscrews **56.** In one preferred method, the satellite dish assembly **12** is attached to the plate **52** at the end of the arm **46**. The assembly **12** and arm **46** combination is then slidably and rotatably connected to the mount **24.** The assembly **12** is aligned as desired. The setscrews **56** are then tightened to secure the arm **46** and thus the assembly **12** in place.

[0035] In the mounting bracket **11** described earlier with reference to FIG. 2, the body portion **28** and rib **60**, as well as the elongate arm **46** and plate **52** described with reference to the soffit mounting bracket **10** are effective when used in the wall mounting bracket **11** illustrated with reference to FIG. 11. Further, the arm **46** and plate **52** combination above described may be a common element for both mounting brackets **10**, **11.**

[0036] With reference to FIGS. 12-16, the wall mounting bracket **11** comprises a mount **25** having the body portion **28** having the elongate rib **60** together attached to a wall mount flange **62** having a plurality of holes **64** for mounting the flange **62** to the sidewall **22**, as illustrated with reference again to FIG. 2. The rib **60** includes the threaded holes **58**, as earlier described for securing the arm **46** into the bore **44**. In a method of installation, the flange **62** is attached to the sidewall **22**. The satellite dish assembly is attached to the plate **52** of the arm **46**, and the assembly **12** and arm **46** combination is rotatably and slidably connected to the body portion **28**, and aligned as desired. The setscrews **56** are then secured against the arm **46** for locking the arm and thus the assembly in place.

[0037] By way of further example, and with reference to FIG. 17, the plate **52** may have alternate shapes such as the hourglass or I-beam shape herein described without departing from the teachings of the present invention. As above described, the arm **46** and plate **52**, **66** may be used in either bracket **10**, **11**.

[0038] Yet further, while function and structure of alternate embodiments of the present invention as herein described in detail, it is to be understood that appearance of each embodiment promotes their acceptance and use. By way of example, a homeowner ready to attaché a mounting bracket to his home in order to receive a satellite signal would prefer the "cleanest" looking and simplest looking design such a those described earlier and illustrated by way of further example with reference to FIGS. 18 and 19 for the mounts **24**, **25**.

[0039] Many modifications and other embodiments of the invention will come to the mind of one skilled in the art having the benefit of the teachings presented in the foregoing descriptions and the associated drawings. Therefore, it is to be understood that the invention is not to be limited to the specific embodiments disclosed, and that modifications and alternate embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims.